

RESTORING RESPECT

GREGG WARD

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GREGG WARD MCEC, BCC  
AUTHOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING,  
BESTSELLING BUSINESS FABLE  
THE RESPECTFUL LEADER

# RESTORING RESPECT

A “how-to” guide for supporting the  
repair of broken work relationships

“A powerful process that restores respect  
and gets folks back to working well together again.”

—from the Foreword by Marshall Goldsmith

NYT Bestselling Author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

# Restoring Respect by Gregg Ward

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# Restoring Respect

A "how-to" guide for supporting  
the repair of broken work relationships

By  
Gregg Ward MCEC, BCC

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### I. Foreword |

#### By Marshall Goldsmith

As an Executive Coach for over 40 years, I am passionate about helping successful people get even better. I learned early in my career that executive coaching not only helps leaders in their professional lives, but also positively impacts their personal relationships and family life as well. When we learn to change behaviors that are detrimental to the trust, respect, and efficiency of our teams and company, we learn better communication skills that translate into success in profound ways.

Respect is a fundamental element for a positive company culture, and yet, too often we find employees and managers behaving in ways that their colleagues perceive as disrespectful. The negative impacts of disrespect can be felt throughout a company — from breakdowns in team communication, frustration with work or the organization, a decrease in motivation and collaboration, to shutting down or checking out completely.

In Gregg Ward's latest book, *Restoring Respect: a how-to guide for supporting the repair of broken work relationships*, he takes coaching to the next level. Gregg's created a unique, ten-step process called *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup>, which is designed to support leaders and coworkers in addressing conflicts due to disrespect issues. This book provides a clear understanding of how respect functions in relationships, the disconnects that can come up, and a powerful process that restores respect and gets folks back to working well together again.

## Restoring Respect by Gregg Ward

Ward, the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Respectful Leadership, is an expert on this topic and has been helping leaders and teams recover from toxic, disrespectful work relationships and cultures for decades.

*Restoring Respect* covers key concepts on respect and disrespect and introduces some very useful neuroscience to help readers better understand root issues. The book then outlines the essential techniques of coaching and facilitation before diving into the ten-steps of the *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup> (CfR) process Gregg has developed.

An excellent, no-nonsense writer, Gregg lays out the process well, provides specific goals for each step, and even recommends the language you should use to effectively run it.

Also, Gregg makes it clear you don't have to be an expert coach to run the CfR process. You could be in HR, learning and development, legal, a board member, or even a retired senior manager who has the people skills and genuine desire to help people work better together. All you'll need are good listening skills, a bit of patience and emotional intelligence, and the persistence to follow the process step-by-step while keeping yourself calm, focused, purposeful, and of course, respectful.

As I see it, any well-thought-out book and process that helps us create more respectful work environments is a real winner. *Restoring Respect* is exactly that.

Marshall Goldsmith  
Thinkers50 #1 Executive Coach  
New York Times Bestselling Author of  
*The Earned Life, Triggers, and  
What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

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*Respect is like air. As long as it's present, nobody thinks about it. But if you take it away, it's all that people can think about.*  
From the Book, *Crucial Conversations*

## II. Before You Dive In |

### Is This What You're Looking For?

If you're in one of these roles...

- ✓ Human Resources, Leadership Development
- ✓ Executive Coach, Employee Relations, Organization Consultant
- ✓ In-House Attorney, Outside Counsel, Dispute Resolution Expert, Mediator
- ✓ Senior Executive, Emeritus Advisor, Board Member
- ✓ Frustrated Manager, Employee

...and you've seen what I'm about to describe, and you've been thinking, "There has to be a better way," then this book is for you.

**Same Old, Same Old.** Usually, when coworkers and/or managers and their subordinates lose respect for one another and their relationship dynamic starts to impact their work and the work of the people around them, the typical organizational responses include well-meaning exhortations to "just get along," generalized private chats with the participants by Human Resources, senior management, or supportive colleagues, or, quite often, no action at all.

If someone's disrespectful behavior is determined to have approached or crossed a policy or legal line, then an investigation may be launched, followed by

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disciplinary action, or interventional coaching, a lateral transfer, demotion, or termination. Even retaliation and/or constructive discharge may occur, or – once again – no action at all.

Even with the best of intentions, typical outcomes from these organizational responses include people saying, “That’s just how they are,” continuing disrespect, decreasing performance, collaboration, teamwork, and productivity, increased distancing, resentment, tension, disengagement, hostility, as well as potential for sabotage, plus turnover, resulting in loss of experience, intellectual capital, and productivity. Most people will agree that these are not particularly desirable outcomes.

Based on my work over more than two decades, it’s obvious that most organizations would prefer to see more positive outcomes, but don’t necessarily know how to get there.

**A Better Outcome.** Ideally, most organizations want to see a relationship in which respect has been lost return to a level of functionality to the point where the participants can work well enough together to meet organizational goals and key performance indicators (KPI’s) over a sustained period without further significant issues or negative impacts to the organization.

This book, and the *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup> (*CfR*) process it outlines, is designed to help you and organization achieve these goals.

**Backstory to the process.** I developed the *CfR* process in the early 2010’s, after extensive coaching, facilitation, and mediation training, exposure to alternative dispute resolution techniques, and obtaining credentials and experience serving as an executive coach to hundreds of leaders in global businesses and government, many of whom wanted me to help them address what they call “personality conflicts” in their organizations.

At that same time, because of my knowledge of and passion for respect and Respectful Leadership<sup>™</sup>, I concluded that since I can coach co-workers who’d lost respect for each other back to the point where they have enough mutual respect to

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work again together reasonably well, then it might be useful to others if I were to outline my step-by-step process so that they could do the same. That process is what this book is all about.

I should say however, that if I'd only been trained as a coach without exposure to mediation or alternative dispute resolution concepts, or if I'd only been trained as a facilitator in conflict resolution or as a mediator without serving as a coach, I doubt I would have been able to develop the *CfR* process. My experience as a middle child, a Little League umpire, and as a husband and parent also helped.

But perhaps one of greatest influencing experiences I've ever had – in relation to developing the *CfR* process – occurred long before I became any of those things.

Back in the 1980's, when I was a young, starving professional theater artist in New York City, I fell into a job working for the New York City Police Department. I was tasked with working with a team of experts on developing a training program that used the techniques of professional theater and improvisation to teach officers to successfully manage what the police call “Emotionally Disturbed Persons” (EDP's). For over two years, I worked directly with world class police psychologists, hostage negotiators, members of the Emergency Services Unit, veteran beat cops, and distinguished professors at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to create a groundbreaking training program that would prove to be far more successful than anyone had anticipated.

I learned that it is possible, if you are careful, compassionate, respectful, and purposeful, to support people effectively through an emotionally loaded crisis brought on by feeling disrespected by others, or by an accusation of disrespect toward others. I learned you can guide them on de-escalating themselves, gaining new perspectives, and in choosing positive and productive paths forward. The *CfR* process is essentially a distillation of that formative experience, plus everything I learned, experienced, and practiced subsequently.

**What is *CfR*<sup>TM</sup>?** *Coaching for Respect*<sup>TM</sup> is a ten-step process that uses concepts around respect and disrespect, along with relationship coaching, psychology, and conflict and alternative dispute resolution techniques to facilitate



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and support the restoration of some level of respect to, and the repair of, work relationships that have become dysfunctional due to loss of respect.

So, if you have colleagues who have fallen out with each other due to perceived disrespectful behaviors, and *if* you have the willingness, the positional authority, the coaching and conflict resolution skills, and the patience to try something supportive and collaborative first, and *if* the participants are genuinely willing for you to try this strategy with them, and *if* legal and HR have signed off (I know, that's a lot of "*if's*"), then the *CfR* process may be exactly what's needed to help turn that relationship around.

**In summary, this book is for you if you're looking for a process to help you support colleagues who genuinely want to rebuild their work relationship after respect between them has been lost.**

At the Center for Respectful Leadership, which I founded in 2019 because of my own personal mission and passion around this topic, we believe the *CfR* process is a viable option when people lose respect for each other. It's something every organization should *consider trying first* (even if they rule it out), before moving on to more formal, investigative, disciplinary, and legal remedies.

At the core of this process is a simple question: *what do you respect in the other?* We've found that when co-workers fall out over disrespectful behavior or language, what they do respect in their colleagues isn't completely obscured. It's just being overridden by strong negative feelings. Once the "what happened," the others' intentions, and the impacts and perceptions have been uncovered and explored through coaching and rational discussion, the attributes that they do respect in one another become easier to see. Then, after genuine apologies have been made, the process builds on these respected attributes to create a "behavioral bridge" to a functional relationship going forward.

But we also want to make it clear that *CfR* is a voluntary process; participants must willingly choose to engage in it. No one should be forced, coerced, or mandated to participate, or threatened if they don't, because if they are, it will fail and possibly make things worse for everyone.

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**What Does It Take?** It's important that you know that facilitating this process isn't a walk in the park; and it's not something anyone can do. *CfR* takes time, and you'll need to have some small group facilitation and executive-level coaching experience and acumen. It also takes a lot of emotional intelligence, patience, the willingness and authority to shut the process down, and the self-management skills to stay present, calm, and focused while the people you're coaching are in denial or emotional, resistant, manipulative, or downright ornery.

This is one of the many reasons why we have established a *CfR* Certification program at the Center for Respectful Leadership and strongly encourage you to take it. It's designed to provide you with a solid grounding in the concepts and the process, and some "real world" practice using it in experiential learning sessions with live, professional actors improvising in what we call "living case studies," so that you'll be fully prepared to run it when the need occurs.

**Not Guaranteed, Sorry.** It's also important to know that the *CfR* process is not guaranteed to work every time. There are simply too many variables, including people lacking in self-awareness, or being insincere or out of integrity, competing personal agendas, organizational politics, and the possibility that one or both the participants considers the other's behavior to be what we call an "unrightable wrong" (more on this later). Often as not, these variables will stall or derail the process completely.

But many agree that *CfR* is worth trying, especially since both participants will benefit from having gone through it (even if the relationship isn't repaired), making future problems less likely.

Bottom line, if the participants have a genuine desire to repair their relationship and are willing to look at and "own" their own disrespectful behavior while charting a new course for change and committing to it, then the chances of a decent outcome via the *CfR* process are good. And, if it does work, then a heck of a lot of angst, time, effort, and money will be saved, which is a win-win for any organization and for the people directly involved.

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**A Work In Progress.** As the creator of the *CfR* process, I should add that it's always a work in progress. I learn something new about how to do it "better" every time I run it. And I'll admit that I occasionally skip a step or spend a lot more time on another simply because my gut and experience tell me I should. These are two more compelling reasons why becoming certified in *CfR* is a good idea.

**Thank You!** Lastly, we thank you for your interest in *CfR*, your willingness to consider using it, and your openness to the possibility that respect can be restored within broken work relationships if there's a genuine desire by all to do so. Please let us know how we can help and support you.

Respectfully Yours,

Gregg Ward MCEC, BCC  
Founder | Executive Director  
Center for Respectful Leadership  
[Hello@RespectfulLeadership.org](mailto>Hello@RespectfulLeadership.org)

**A Reason Not To.** A word of caution: as you read through this book and learn about the process, and you come to feel that *CfR* is not something you're comfortable facilitating, then I urge you to trust your instincts. It's better that you choose not to facilitate the process if you're anxious about doing so, or if you feel that as an insider, you're unable to remain objective, or if the organizational politics are working against you or the goals of the process.

Instead, reach out to us and we'll identify *CfR*-Certified external coaches who may be able to help. Often, bringing in an impartial outsider to run the process is much more effective and can have a greater chance of success.

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*I would try to make sure that I and my friends were always treated with respect. Whether anyone likes me or not is irrelevant. The relevant thing to me was to be respected, and by being respected myself and by being respectful, it could create an atmosphere where the folks around me were also to be respected.*

Bill Russell

### III. |

## Respect Matters

Before using the *CfR* process, you should have a solid understanding of what respect and disrespect are, the neuroscience involved, the impact they have on work relationships, and how they function depending on culture, personal experience, unconscious biases, personality, and communication style.

This section is a primer on respect and disrespect and is designed to support you with important information and concepts as you prepare to run the process. (NOTE: For a deeper dive and different learning experience, you might also want to engage with our suite of self-directed, e-Learning programs on respect that we call *The Roadmap2Respect* which you can access via the Center for Respectful Leadership's website.)

**What Is Respect?** We've found that most people don't think about respect very much unless there's a lack of it. And then, that's all they think about. Turns out that respect in work relationships is far more important than most of us think it is.

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We'll start simply. At the Center for Respectful Leadership, we define respect as...

**...feeling and displaying genuine admiration and appreciation for someone based on their abilities, qualities, achievements, and/or position, or simply because they're another human being.**

To be clear, this definition focuses on one type of respect, what we call “interpersonal respect.” (We’ve found that there are at least two or three other types of respect). Also, this is considered a “western” definition by most experts, since there are some cultures that have varying historic and societal expectations around what is considered respectful behavior – such as, bowing as part of a greeting, making direct eye contact, or avoiding it, etc., and who is automatically deserving of respect – such as your elders and those in authority.

Historically speaking, throughout most of the modern industrial era, if workers talked about interpersonal respect at all, then they expressed the idea that feeling respected at work was a nice-to-have, rather than a key motivator. Many workers – especially those at the lowest levels – had few expectations of being respected, believing instead that workers weren’t “deserving” of their bosses’ respect unless they’d “earned it.” As for bosses, many assumed that they would be automatically respected by their workers for no other reason than their job title. They assumed that workers should know this and behave accordingly.

Sadly, old perceptions and traditions die hard. Today, in many organizations and cultures, these traditional “rules of interpersonal respect” are still very much in play. But the fact is, we’re in a much different work world now, and just about everything has changed.

Today, due to advancements in psychology, research in neuroscience, on-the-ground experience by experts, the massive changes wrought by technology, the pandemic, and generational expectations, we now have a much greater understanding of the nature of respect. And we can see its impact on work relationships, productivity, engagement, and collaboration in ways we never have before.

We’ve learned that feeling respected matters much more to employees than once believed. Research shows that if your employees feel respected, valued,

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trusted, and treated kindly, then they are much more likely to stay with your organization. They will be more likely to treat your customers with respect, put in the extra hours and effort when the going gets tough, and remain upbeat and resilient in the face of challenges. As a bonus, they'll usually be happier.

Sadly, according to several recent, reputable, large-scale studies, and extensive research, it appears that disrespect and incivility are much more common and have greater negative impacts than previously thought. This is strongly supported by expert analysis of tens of thousands of reports of disrespect posted on anonymous, online rater sites like Glassdoor and Comparably, workplace cultural surveys that have been made public, and industry assessments.

Before we go any further, it's important that we make a distinction between disrespect in the workplace and other, even more destructive, unlawful types of behavior including theft, fraud, industrial sabotage, vandalism, violence, violent bullying, threats of physical harm, and sexual harassment. These all, in one way or another, cross over a particular line into what many experts call "deviant workplace behavior." The *CfR* process is not a viable option with deviant workplace behaviors.

Secondarily, there is a broader category of behaviors that many experts are calling a "toxic work environment," which we at the Center for Respectful Leadership define as...

**"...a culture where employees feel disrespected on a regular basis, where diversity, equity and inclusion are not valued, and where unethical practices are tolerated or even encouraged."**

If an organization is being repeatedly labeled by more than just a handful of employees as a "toxic work environment," then, again, the *CfR* process is not a viable option.

And there is one other area in which *CfR* is not a viable option: with people who have some type of psychiatric or personality disorder including sociopathy, narcissism, avoidant and antisocial personality disorders, among others. If you have concerns about someone's behavior that might make you suspect these disorders, we strongly recommend you consult with a qualified medical professional before considering *CfR*.

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### Expert Praise for Gregg Ward and *Restoring Respect*...

"If you're like me, you know the grief or elation of a conflict resolution process gone bad or gone well. As expertly outlined in *Restoring Respect*, Gregg Ward's *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup> process makes success much more likely. It will help you, help your employees, and your organization become more civil, respectful, and conflict-free."

**Cynthia Burnham, SVP (retired)**  
**UBS Financial Services Forum for**  
**Alternate Issue Resolution (F.A.I.R.)**

"Gregg Ward's new book *Restoring Respect* and the *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup> process he outlines in it are invaluable when you're committed to making a positive difference in your organization in teamwork, leadership, and culture.

**Sally Helgesen, Premier Women's Leadership Expert**  
**Bestselling Author, *How Women Rise***

"Master Corporate Executive Coach Gregg Ward locks into a leadership secret that we have forgotten... the "might" of RESPECT. Gregg's book takes us through a tour de force process of how to bring it back into the workplace."

**CB Bowman, CEO**  
**Association of Corporate Executive Coaches**  
**Author, *Courage to Leap & Lead***

"I strongly recommend *Restoring Respect* for anyone looking to advance their own understanding of how to reconcile work relationships when respect has been lost. It's easy to read and understand and provides you with the practical knowledge and tools needed to be an effective peacemaker."

**Adam Noakes, Administrative Law Judge**  
**Expert, Alternative Dispute Resolution**

"Having worked with leaders for over 40 years as both a trainer and a coach, I know that what Gregg is providing in this book is foundational for any leader. Without mutual respect the leader's path is fraught with challenge and disappointment. With it, the leader's path becomes significantly easier. The wisdom in this book is worth learning and putting into practice."

**Frank Wagner, Co-Founder Stakeholder Centered Coaching®**  
**Thinkers50 Top 50 Leadership Coaches - 2021**  
**Author, *The Power of Total Commitment***

"In our current charged environment, Gregg Ward's new book - *Restoring Respect*, couldn't come at a better time. It's a powerful guide on how to lead with a positive attitude in a way that brings organizations together in every situation. It is a must read for every leader and their team!"

**Maya Hu-Chan, Top 8 Global Solutions Thinker, Top Leadership Coach 2021**  
**Bestselling author, *Saving Face: How to Preserve Dignity and Build Trust***

"Respect for each other is a critical component of any successful team and when lost can be extremely detrimental to morale and productivity. In his new book, Gregg Ward clearly and concisely outlines key steps that can be undertaken to restore respect if all parties are engaged. This approach has the potential to repair relationships and promote successful working environments."

**Rachel Soloff, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director Research**  
**Global Pharmaceutical Company**

"As a leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy and an experienced coach, I found this book and its hands-on framework to be exactly the guide we

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need right now. Ward's *Coaching for Respect*<sup>™</sup> process is a powerful answer to the high-costs and contagious impact of lost respect and trust."

**Sarah Chapman Bacerra, Founder/CEO  
Trailblazing in Color**

"If you are looking for a better way to regain respect in the workplace and to allow teams to function and even thrive, look no further than Gregg Ward's excellent book. *Restoring Respect* provides a step-by-step process for doing just that!"

**Ana Melikian, Ph.D., Host of the Mindset Zone Podcast  
Human Potential Expert**

"As an executive coach who worked over two decades as a C-Level executive, I can say that *Restoring Respect* brings a much-needed process to restoring relationships in the workplace."

**Jon Saunders, Executive Coach  
Peak Leadership Academy**

"This book is an authoritative and significant contribution to understanding a critical area of respect: Interpersonal Respect. All managers and leaders who are intent on bolstering respect in their organizations should read it."

**Gerald L. Finch, Ph.D., Co-Director of The Respect Project—Latin America, Professor  
of Management and Psychology  
Universidad San Francisco de Quito**

"As co-author of *The Respectful Leader* and a long-time colleague of Gregg Ward's, I know his outstanding work on leadership very well. What he's introducing in *Restoring Respect* is truly groundbreaking - that we don't have to give up on work relationships that have soured due to disrespect, and that it's entirely possible to bring people back together, restore respect and create outstanding business outcomes, even in the toughest situations."

**Walter G. Meyer  
Bestselling Author, *Rounding Third***

"Gregg Ward is a tremendous thought leader who, in his latest book, highlights a simple solution to the most complex relationship challenge any of us may face - the loss of respect. In this much-needed resource, Gregg provides actionable steps for restoring respect so we can get the most out of our work and lives."

**Eddie Turner, Principal Consultant and Executive Coach  
Linkage, Inc., Top 25 Thought Leader - Thinkers360**

"When respect is missing it sucks the life out of teams and the professional relationships that we need to ensure success. If we all applied some of the simple steps outlined in *Restoring Respect*, we'd reduce stress and anxiety at work, increase candor and collaboration, and ultimately achieve better results together."

**Morag Barrett, CEO of SkyeTeam  
Author of *You, Me, We*, and *Cultivate: The Power of Winning Relationships***

"As a business executive as well as an executive coach working across the globe, I've learned that the meaning of the word "respect" differs among people and cultures. Gregg, the great storyteller he is, has been able to weave his magic in a very human and entertaining way, allowing us to draw our own learning and conclusions on how a relationship crosses the bridge from being dysfunctional to becoming fully respectful."

**Cellene Hoogenkamp  
Founder & CEO, KokuaHub, On-Demand Coaching  
Author, *The Key to World-Class Team Performance***

"In his latest book, Gregg Ward identifies key concepts around respect and provides a clear framework for resolving workplace conflict. As a former COO



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and now an executive coach specializing in working with abrasive executives, I applaud his focus on respect and restoring it whenever possible."

**Jordan Goldrich MG100, MCEC, PCC**

**Founder/CEO, Workplace Warrior Inc.**

**Author, *Workplace Warrior: People Skills for The No-Bullshit Executive***

"In his work on Respectful Leadership™, Gregg Ward has created an incredible foundation of powerful leadership and coaching techniques. These contagious methods have led to cultural and behavioral changes that are the core standard for internal and external relationships. His latest book, *Restoring Respect*, expertly lays out a roadmap for managing disruptive and dysfunctional behaviors that have been ignored for far too long."

**Joslyn Barroso**

**Director, Human Resources**

**Leonardo DRS - LE/EOIS/NIS**

"I believe when we reflect on our careers and the colleagues, peers and bosses we have worked with, each one of us has experienced disrespect - whether it was overt or covert. Gregg Ward takes the reader on a practical and straightforward 10-step journey to recognizing, understanding and addressing this type of conflict to restore relationships and ultimately build a more inclusive and positive workplace. *Restoring Respect* is a must have for your business and professional development bookshelf!"

**Allison Akers Davis**

**Leadership and Organization Development Expert**

**Master Corporate Executive Coach**

**Founder and President Akers Davis**